

BANA

USAID/Eritrea Newsletter



ERITREA

Volume 1, Issue 1

Summer 2004

The Cycle of Malaria Transmission

Anopheles mosquito infected with malaria parasite



Parasites enter the blood stream when an infected mosquito bites a human. They multiply in the host's liver and red blood cells. Pregnant women are especially vulnerable because they produce blood to nourish their growing fetuses.



Eventually the red blood cells burst with a new generation of parasites, causing fever, shivering, pain and possible death.



The cycle of transmission continues when another mosquito bites an infected person, picks up more parasites, and bites again.



Malaria in Eritrea: Preventing Death by Mosquito

Malaria sickened 300 million people last year in Sub-Saharan Africa and killed another 3 million. Malaria is also a serious problem in Eritrea. Eritrea's unique geography and climate means malaria is transmitted at different times in different areas, with the short rainy seasons being the time of greatest risk.

About two-thirds of Eritrea's population live in malaria risk areas. Those at highest risk for contracting malaria are pregnant women and children under 5 years. Over 90% of the malaria cases in Eritrea are often fatal parasitic *Plasmodium falciparum* strain carried by anopheles mosquitoes. The range of these mosquitoes depends on the availability of water so treating and draining breeding sites can dramatically

reduce the level of malaria transmission. National Malaria Control Program's (NMCP) comprehensive malaria control efforts include environmental management (killing mosquitoes before they can bite), personal protection (using bed nets to avoid being bitten), and prompt and adequate case management (recognizing and treating malaria in a timely manner).

USAID through the Environmental Health Project EHP, has supported long term advisors to the NMCP skilled in Entomology, Epidemiology since 1998. With this technical expertise the Eritrean Ministry of Health has conducted two national surveys and several studies of vector ecology, vector behavior, efficacy of insecticides, and the use of

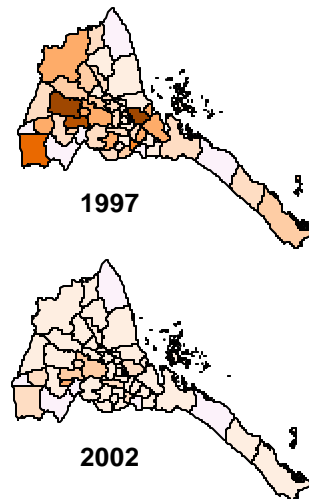
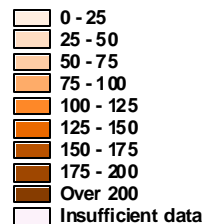
bed nets to enhance their evidence-based decision making.

Currently, USAID supported activities are focused on developing methods for the NMCP to forecast malaria risk and make preparations to prevent epidemics. Using Geographic Information Sciences (GIS) mapping techniques, data was gathered to reconstruct the events of the severe malarial epidemic in Eritrea during 1997-98. Results of the analysis

are being used to identify improvements in program planning, epidemic preparedness and in revising malaria risk maps. The need continues for field-based operational research and to use the findings to support policies and strategies for effective malaria prevention and control in Eritrea. USAID will provide the necessary technical support for this evolution in the NMCP.

Average Annual Malaria Incidence

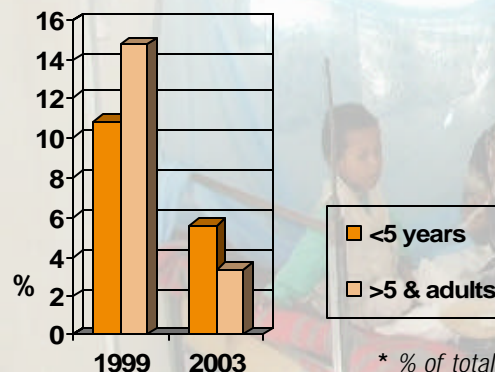
Provided by EHP/USAID



Initial Prevention Success

From 1999 to 2003, Eritrea succeeded in nearly halving the proportional malaria mortality rate among children under 5, slashing the number of fatalities to one of the lowest levels in Africa. Under its current 5-year plan, the Ministry of Health plans to reduce morbidity and mortality by 80% by the end of 2005.

Proportional Malaria Mortality Rates*



* % of total deaths due to malaria



USAID Hosts Environmental Capacity Building Conference

USAID, in collaboration with the Eritrea Department of the Environment, hosted an ENCAP Conference for over 40 participants from NGOs and government ministries June 28-July 2, 2004 at the Mereb Hotel in Mendera. The week-long conference was facilitated by trainers from the Nairobi-based Regional Economic Development Services Office (REDSO) and local environmental consultants.

The course given at the conference has been taught in 20 Eastern and Southern African countries, and it is aimed to strengthen the environ-

mental review, management and monitoring capacity for small-scale development projects under the USAID Mission, and for host country collaborators.

The week's activities provided the participants with the knowledge and skills needed to comply with USAID environmental review requirements culminating in site visits to USAID Mission supported NGO projects where participant teams carried out environmental assessments and prepared mitigation plans that were later presented to the group. ENCAP participants conduct an environmental assessment at the Ar-

g'zana small-scale micro-dam project initiated by The International Rescue Committee in the Debub Region.

"After participating in this course I can carry out environmental reviews for the development projects we implement."
-Alem Tekeste, Conference Participant
CHF International Program Manager



Mercy Corps Aids Livestock Crisis in NRS



Former U.S. Ambassador to Eritrea Donald McConnell and USAID/ Eritrea Mission Director Dr. Jatinder Cheema made a field visit to Mercy Corps' USG-funded projects in the Northern Red Sea (NRS) zone over May 27-29, 2004. One such project, the Sheep and Goat Maintenance and Market Development Program, addresses the immediate livestock crisis brought on by drought, and creates longer-term economic opportunities for agropastoralist communities.

At the Gahtelai Demonstration Farm (GDF), Mercy Corps has established a central flock by collecting sheep and goats (1,500 to date) from participating herders in exchange for providing feed and veterinary services to herders' remaining animals; 36,700 small ruminants have received such services so far.

PROJECT INNOVATION

Mercy Corps, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, is experimenting at GDF with the use of feeds based on halophytes—plants that can be irrigated with seawater.

New University Labs



On May 6, 2004 a team of five from the US Embassy and USAID, visited the University of Asmara's new computer labs located in the College of Engineering, the Department of Computer Science, the Digital Research Library and the IT labs at the Consulting, Testing and Training Center (CTTC) near downtown Asmara. The number of computers on campus has doubled through a USAID cooperative agreement. The primary goal for procuring

the new equipment is to provide access to the Internet and information otherwise not available to the students in Eritrea.

USAID has also been working closely with the University of Asmara to forge linkages with two American universities, the State University of New York at Stony Brook and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, to strengthen the local capacities of both staff and students, namely in the fields of social sciences, journalism, and health, through faculty and student exchange programs, the development of curricula and textbooks and the procurement of equipment.

Eritrean Livestock Trade Association in the Works

The Red Sea Livestock and Trade Commission (RSLTC), a recently created body under the African Union's Nairobi based Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources, visited Eritrea over June 14-15, 2004 to professionalize livestock trade in the region. Dr. M. Ali Gedi, Regional Advisor to the RSLTC, met with representative from Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Eritrea National Chamber of Commerce (ENCC), US NGOs and private sector livestock establishment of an Eritrean Livestock Trade Association (ELTA). The ELTA will include representatives from the MOA and ENCC and private business owners from fisheries, livestock, tannery and dairy sectors and allow members more opportunities for trade in the region.

A Better Banana

Under the Rural Enterprise Investment Partnership between the U.S. and Eritrean governments, the NGO ACDI/VOCA is assisting banana growers in Gash Barka to upgrade their growing techniques to provide better bananas to the domestic and export markets through a USAID Development Assistance agreement.

Honduran expert Leonel Castillo visited Eritrea over June 7-23 and July 12-30, 2004 to work on the installation of a demonstration farm near Akurdet, complete with bore hole, sprinkler irrigation, cableways, and a packing station. Participating farmers also benefited from advice on how to improve production and marketing techniques.